

"From a Long Life in the Service of Art"

Albert Mertz

Stalke Galleri
Vesterbrogade 14A

23.2 to 6.4.2001

ALBERT MERTZ "FROM A LONG LIFE IN THE SERVICE OF ART"

From February 23 to April 6, 2001, Stalke Galleri presented an exhibition of works by Albert Mertz, featuring pieces from Lone Mertz's collection. The exhibition included paintings and collages/drawings from the early 1950s to 1990, many of which had not previously been shown. The selection was curated by Lone Mertz, **Søren Andreasen**, and **Jes Brinch**.

The exhibition offered a unique opportunity to see a comprehensive presentation of Albert Mertz's work. The curators emphasized the diverse nature of Mertz's artistic practice. He could be characterized as an "artistic problem-solver" who found inspiration in discussions about the production and function of art—whether related to specific forms of artistic expression or to the broader cultural context of productivity. Albert Mertz was consistently preoccupied with the conditions of art, and by examining selected works from his practice, viewers were able to experience a spectrum ranging from the sublime to the banal.

The exhibition was primarily structured around series of works, demonstrating how individual pieces contributed to the ongoing interplay of form, systematics, and symbolism that defined Albert Mertz's artistic practice. These works entertained, provoked, invited meditation, and perplexed. As Albert Mertz wrote in his diary in 1983:

"A work of art must be seen... in a context with the surrounding culture, as a medium and not as a goal."

The exhibition, which ran until April 6, was installed by Søren Andreasen.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a catalogue featuring a text by Jes Brinch was published.



Lone Mertz and Søren Andreasen



In his text, Jes Brinch portrays Albert Mertz as an artist and teacher who insisted that art must be meaning-making and connected to life beyond institutional frameworks. For Mertz, art was not an elevated system but a site of responsibility, reflection, and doubt

Brinch emphasizes Mertz's teaching as dialogical and confrontational, grounded in asking questions rather than providing answers. Doubt and critical thinking were central tools, and art had to justify its relevance within society. At the same time, Mertz is described as a teacher who combined art history, personal experience, and humor, leaving a lasting impact on his students well beyond the academic context.

The text presents Albert Mertz as a figure who remained curious, self-critical, and engaged to the very end, and whose artistic and pedagogical practice was driven by a strong sense of ethical responsibility.

(Jes Brinch):

Asking questions is more important than providing answers.



Catalogue cover of Albert Mertz – Works from a Long Life in the Service of Art, with text contribution by Jes Brinch.

The exhibition of Albert Mertz at Galleri Stalke was met with strong critical acclaim across major Danish newspapers, highlighting both the breadth and vitality of his artistic practice.

In Jyllands-Posten, Pernille Anker Kristensen emphasized the exhibition's richness and dynamism, describing Mertz's work as driven by an "abundance of ideas". She noted how the presentation moved effortlessly between painting, collage, and drawing, balancing humor with conceptual clarity and shifting between the sublime and the seemingly banal.

Writing about the exhibition, Mai Misfeldt focused on the persistent energy of Mertz's work, characterizing the show as "art full of energy." She underlined how the exhibition revealed a continuous dialogue between art and reality, and how Mertz's serial approach and material experimentation sustained an intense sense of movement and inquiry across decades.

In Politiken, Kristine Kern praised the exhibition as "brilliant," highlighting Mertz's rare ability to make conceptual art both accessible and intellectually rigorous. She described his practice as a form of "folk conceptualism," in which sharp ideas are communicated with clarity, wit, and social awareness, without losing their critical edge.

Together, the reviews present Albert Mertz as a singular figure in Danish art: conceptually incisive, materially inventive, and consistently engaged with the cultural and social conditions of his time.

